CHAPTER 39

VARIETIES OF GENITIVE

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39.1 FROM FUNCTION TO FORM

39.1.1 Core function

GENITIVE is basically an adnominal case and in fact, a basic adnominal case. Its core function is to mark a nominal whose referent (**possessor**) is connected by a **possessive relation** to the individual expressed by the phrase within which the genitive phrase is embedded (**possessum**). Hence genitive constructions are a kind of possessive construction (**possessive**) and any discussion of genitives requires a discussion of possessives in general.

The possessive is the most unmarked adnominal construction expressing a relation. This is reflected by the remarkable frequency of possessives, their wide distribution, not uncommon formal simplicity (as compared to other constructions of this kind) and most importantly, semantic unmarkedness. Possessive relations are usually induced from the context and the lexical semantics of the corresponding nominals (Partee 1997; Barker 1995). Thus, (1) could mean 'the book that Liza owns' or 'the book that Liza wrote' or 'the book that Liza photographed' etc., depending on the context:

(1) Russian

knig-a   *Liz-y*
book-NOM.SG Liza-GEN.SG
'Liza's book'

Nonetheless, some relations arise in certain semantic configurations by default, the most prominent of which is the relation of control/ownership. Furthermore, some languages (especially in Oceania) have relational classifiers (Lichtenberk 1983; Aikhenvald 2000), which restrict the possessive relation, while in other languages the possessive relation is sometimes specified by means of a modifier (see Ackerman 1998 and Partee and Borschev 2000 for discussion). For example, in (2), the relation ('being stolen by') between the possessum ('money') and the possessor ('I') is specified by a participle:

(2) West Armenian (Ackerman 1998)

(*im*) *koʁts-adz*   *təram-əs*
I.GEN steal-PTCP.PAST money-1SG
'the money I stole'

Prototypical possessives establish the reference of the possessum via the possessor, an 'anchor' which links the possessum to the context (Keenan 1974; Langacker 1993, 1995; Taylor 1996). This leads to the tendency of (more prototypical) possessives to be specific/definite, which may result in their occasional incompatibility with determiners (Lyons 1986; Haspelmath 1999b) or their use in the expression of contextual definiteness (Fraurud 2001). The best anchors are topical (concrete, animate, definite, and, in the best case, pronominal), hence the inclination of possessors to be more topical. Constructions with non-topical possessors, as in (3), are non-prototypical for possessives; such meanings are often conveyed by non-possessive constructions (e.g. with adjectives).

(3) Georgian (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2004: 159)

p'ur-is   *dana*
bread-GEN knife
'a/the bread knife'

39.1.2 Marking possessives

Since genitive marking is not uniform, it is convenient to begin its description with an excursion into formal types of possessives in general. Possessives utilize various means of marking, which can be classified according to numerous parameters (see Ultan 1978; Seiler 1983; Nichols 1988, 1992; Croft 1990: 27–38; Plank 1995b: 38ff.; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2003a), of which I will discuss three, namely the locus of marking, indexing, and the degree of synthesis.

The most widely used typology of possessive marking is concerned with its locus, that is the participant associated morphosyntactically with this marking. A possessive marker can be associated with the possessor (dependent-marking, as in 1–3) or with the possessum (head-marking, as in 4), or with both (neutral marking, example 5):

(4)   Apalai (Koehn and Koehn 1986: 85)
      nohpo   kyry-ry
      woman   thing-POSS
      'the woman's possession'

(5)   Eastern Pomo (McLendon 1975: 167)
      ká·wk-i-Yà
      person-POSS-bone
      'human bones'

The asymmetry between the participants can also be reflected by word order only (Malay *buku Umar* 'Umar's book'), or by incorporation of the possessor into the possessum (Egyptian Arabic *kitaab-muna* 'Mona's book', Gary and Gamal-Eldin 1982: 48).

Various sorts of marking can combine within one construction. For example, in (2) above, the head-marking suffix cross-referencing the possessor coexists with the dependent-marking genitive.

Next, the possessive marking can be divided into two distinct categories, one that indexes features of a participant other than its locus, and one that does not do so. A comparison of (4) with (2) illustrates this distinction in head-marking constructions. An example of an indexing dependent-marking construction follows (numerals designate noun classes):

(6)   Rwanda (Dubnova 1984: 44)
      iki-bindi   cy'-umu-gore
      VII-vessel   VII.ATTR-I-woman
      '(the) woman's vessel'

Again, non-indexing marking can combine with indexing. Where the latter is based on case concord, we can find two case markers on one nominal, the phenomenon called *Suffixaufnahme* (Plank 1995a):

(7)   Awngi (Hetzron 1995: 326)
      wolijí-w-des   aqí-w-des   ŋə́n-des
      old-GEN-ABL   man-GEN-ABL   house-ABL
      'from the old man's house'

Finally, possessive marking can be classified into synthetic and analytic. Thus, instead of affixes broadly illustrated above (and suprasegmental means like tone, as

in Burmese), dependent-marked possessives frequently involve adpositions, while head-marking possessives may utilize clitics. A kind of possessive close to analytic head-marking is found in some Germanic idioms:

(8)   Colloquial High German (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2003a: 666)
      mein-em   Vater sein Buch
      my-DAT.M.SG father his book
      'my father's book'

Occasionally, characterization of a construction according to the above-mentioned parameters (head-marking/dependent-marking, indexing/non-indexing, and synthetic/analytic) can be problematic. For example, the construction in (8) may display characteristics of dependent-marking and even neutral-marking, together with head-marking ones (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2003a; Strunk 2004). Still, for most data these parameters remain convenient classificatory tools.

39.1.3 Formal expressions of genitive

Given the multiplicity of means of marking found in possessives, a question can be asked: what marking is used in genitive constructions? It seems, however, that the only restrictions on this marking are based on the case status of genitive.

Being a case, genitive by definition constitutes a dependent-marking strategy which is paradigmatically contrasted with marking non-possessive relations. The synthetic genitive is most often expressed with suffixes. However, in Mangarayi the genitive/dative case is sometimes marked by a prefix (e.g. *ŋaya-gaḍugu* 'GEN-woman'; Merlan 1989: 57), and in the extinct Mochica the contrast between the nominative and the genitive forms of singular personal pronouns was conveyed by vowel alternation:

(9)   Mochica (Adelaar with Muysken 2004: 331)

	Nominative	Genitive
1SG	moiñ	mœiñ
2SG	tzhang/tzha	tzhœng

While synthetic genitives are easily recognized, analytic genitives are often treated as adpositions. Where such markers stand in a paradigmatic contrast to similar role markers, they should be considered case expressions. In Tukang Besi the genitive marker apparently attaches to a constituent and is usually contrasted with other cases:

(10) Tukang Besi (Donohue 1999: 344)
      te lai   u   Sentani kene Kota raja
      TOP distance GEN Sentani and Kota raja
      'the distance between (lit. of) Sentani and Kota raja'

Both synthetic and analytic genitive markers may simultaneously express other categories. Most commonly, this involves number (as in Latin *puer-i* 'boy-GEN.SG' vs. *puer-orum* 'boy-GEN.PL'). Another pattern is observed in German, where the genitive is sometimes found only in determiners which simultaneously mark definiteness (cf. *das Bild ein-er Frau* 'the.NOM.N.SG picture a.GEN.F.SG woman'). Note, however, that definiteness/specificity can also be *implied* by the very presence of genitive marking (see below).

A particular pattern to be distinguished from the simultaneous expression of genitive with other categories is reported for Tsez (and some closely related languages), where the choice of a genitive marker depends on the case of the possessum: the direct genitive is found with the absolutive possessum (11a), while the oblique genitive occurs with the possessum in other cases (11b). This is a rare instance of an indexing non-concord genitive.

(11)   Tsez (Kibrik 1995: 222)

    a. *obi-s*   *esij*   *idu-r*   *ajsi*
       father-GEN.DIR brother[ABS] house-INESS came
       'Father's brother came home.'

    b. *obi-z*   *esi-s*   *joł вIutku*
       father-GEN.OBL brother-GEN.DIR be house[ABS]
       'Father's brother owns a house.'

Languages that display multiple strategies of genitive marking are not rare. Usually they divide between pronominal and non-pronominal possessors, where the former have suppletive or more grammaticalized forms. Sometimes pronominal possessors have a distinct position, as in Russian, where genitives usually follow the possessum but third person pronominal genitives typically occur before their heads (cf. *ego otec* 'he.GEN father[NOM.SG]').

Thus, genitives can exploit a number of marking strategies, and the main limitations on them relate to the very definition of genitive as a case.

39.1.4 Restrictions on the use of genitive

Genitive constructions often contrast with possessives of different kinds, which occasionally restricts the use of a genitive marker to certain classes of nominals. There are two tendencies manifested in such restrictions. The first relates to the fact that the genitive is inflection and as such is prone to mark more topical nominals, for which more inflectional distinctions are normally found. A revealing example of a split resulting from this is found in Sinhala, where, judging from Vyxuxolev 1964, the genitive is used with animate possessors only, while inanimate possessors choose the locative. A similar situation is found in a subtype of possessives expressing part–whole relations in some Pama-Nyungan languages and in Imbabura Quechua,

where animate possessors require the genitive (12a), while genitive marking on inanimates (12b) is odd:

(12)   Imbabura Quechua (Cole 1985: 117)
    a. *alku-paj   uma*
      dog-GEN   head
      'the head of the dog'
    b. *yura(ˀ-paj)   uma*
      tree(-GEN)   head
      'the top of the tree'

That the source of such splits is not animacy but topicality is confirmed by languages where the presence of the genitive depends on other topicality features. For example, in Turkish the genitive suffix appears on specific possessors only:

(13)   Turkish (Maizel 1957: 17)
    a. *kadın-ın   şapka-sı*
      woman-GEN   hat-3SG
      'some/the woman's hat'
    b. *kadın   şapka-sı*
      woman   hat-3SG
      'a women's hat'

The second tendency, which partly resists the first, is related to the fact that genitive is opposed to many other possessive means in that it can supply possessors with greater syntactic autonomy. Consequently, at times genitive is not used with more topical possessors, which often function as anchors only and do not need any autonomy. Thus, in Bagvalal, more topical pronominal, singular masculine, and plural human possessors (plus some toponyms) show concord with the possessum (14a), while others employ the genitive (14b):

(14)   Bagvalal (Daniel 2001: 140)
    a. *ehun-dar-alu-b*   *misa*
      blacksmith-PL-OBL.HUM.PL-NHUM   house
      'the blacksmiths' house'
    b. *χₒan-ē-ɫ*   *un-abi*
      horse-OBL.PL-GEN   head-Pl
      'the horses' heads'

Both tendencies manifest themselves in Yiddish: pronominal possessors show concord with the possessum, and human (or personified) nominal possessors are usually marked with the genitive case, while less topical possessors are introduced by a preposition.

39.2 FUNCTIONAL VARIETIES AND POLYSEMY PATTERNS

39.2.1 Functional varieties

Possessives show various oppositions depending on certain characteristics of the possessor, the possessum, and the possessive relation. However, such oppositions are only very rarely conveyed by contrasting different genitive exponents. Instead, functional splits are usually expressed by oppositions between the genitive and other constructions or reflected in variation in syntactic characteristics of genitive phrases.

The possessum's type can affect the choice of a possessive in that some languages distinguish between definite and indefinite possessives. Genitive encoding typically remains neutral to this, though in some languages (e.g. in German) the position of a genitive phrase can imply definiteness. Furthermore, syntactic characteristics of those possessors that do not determine the reference of the possessum but only serve as restrictive modifiers (such as non-specific possessors and arguments of so-called 'picture nouns' like *Lisa Gherardini* in *a/the portrait of Lisa Gherardini*) are often different from possessors serving as full-fledged anchors in their position and capacity to coordinate with other modifiers, be relativized, stacked, etc. (see Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2004; Grashchenkov 2006 among others).

Occasionally it matters whether the possessive relation is given (more or less) unambiguously: thus, **relational nouns** (such as *brother* or *top*) presupposing the existence of some possessor exhibit special behaviour in comparison with other nouns. The distinction between relational and non-relational nouns, when grammaticalized, is called the 'inalienable/alienable distinction' (see Chappell and McGregor 1995). Nichols (1988; 1992) argues that in languages having this opposition, dependent-marking, including genitive, normally marks alienables. However, this does not hold for languages, such as Kuot (Lindström 2002), Budukh, Khinalug, and possibly Polynesian languages, which convey the alienability distinction solely by means of dependent-marking. Khinalug even distinguishes between alienable and inalienable genitives for some nouns (although surprisingly, relational kinship terms belong to the alienable class here):

(15)   Khinalug (Kibrik et al. 1972: 131–2)
    a. *gad-i*   *c'u*
       boy-GEN.INAL name
       'the boy's name'
    b. *gad-e*   *bij*
       boy-GEN.ALIEN father
       'the boy's father'

Notably, inalienable possessors also can have specific syntactic properties. For example, in Japanese, only inalienable possessors allow relativization (Iwasaki 2002: 181).

Finally, it is sometimes important whether the possessor is used exclusively for restricting the reference of the possessum or is relevant to the whole utterance (Lander 2004). This is often reflected by the distinction between adnominal and external (clause-level) possessives (Payne and Barshi 1999). External possessors typically employ a case other than genitive (16), but sometimes genitive appears at the clause-level (17). Furthermore, many languages allow the use of a genitive phrase without the possessum (18).

(16) French (Lamiroy and Delbecque 1998)
      On lui   a   cassé   le   pied
      one he.DAT has broken the foot
      'They broke his foot.'

(17) Udi
      χačan-i=jal   sa eʁel=e   bak-sa
      Khachan-GEN=and one ram=3SG be-PRES
      'And Khachan has a ram.'

(18) Basque (Saltarelli 1988: 161)
      diru-a   ama-ren-a   d-a
      money-ABS.SG mother-GEN.SG-ABS.SG 3.ABS-PRES(-be)
      'The money is mother's.'

39.2.2 Non-possessive uses of genitive

At the phrase-level, genitive sometimes appears to mark dependents of the heads that do not describe entities. The most frequent patterns of this kind are described below.

(i) It is not unusual for genitives to mark arguments in constructions such as (19), where a verb acquires nominal features in order to serve as an argument of some other predicate.

(19) Lithuanian (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2003b: 733)
      Kolumb-o   Amerik-os   atradi-ma-s
      Columbus-GEN.SG America-GEN.SG discover-AN-NOM.SG
      'Columbus' discovery of America'

Note, however, that cross-linguistically this is just one of many ways of coding such dependents, and languages vary considerably as to which arguments can be coded by genitive (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993; 2003b).

(ii) In a number of languages like Turkish, Manchu, Chukchi, Sinhala, and Japanese, genitive can code the subject of a relative clause:

(20)   Japanese (Andrews 1985b: 27)
       kore wa ano hito   ga/no   kai-ta   hon desu
       this TOP that person NOM/GEN write-PAST book is
       'This is the book which that person wrote.'

Sometimes this can be explained by the participle use of nominalizations, yet in other cases the source of this function of genitive can be a construction such as (2) specifying the possessive relation.

(iii) Occasionally genitive is used in quantificational constructions, presumably due to the nominal origin of the relevant quantificational elements, or to the fact that such items frequently have some properties of the nominal head (cf. Abney 1987). The following example illustrates genitives governed by a numeral and a measure noun:

(21)   Ossetic (Axvlediani 1963: 169)
       æxsæz xos-y   t'yfyl-y
       six   hay-GEN pile-GEN
       'six piles of hay'

(iv) In a few languages genitive participates in constructions involving several nominals characterizing the same referent.

(22)   Bagvalal (Daniel 2001: 150)
       mosku(-ĩ)   mak'a
       Moscow(-Gen) place
       'the city of Moscow'

For other kinds of possessives, a related phenomenon occurs whereby a semantic modifier appears as the head while the noun determining the reference of the phrase is marked as a possessor (Ross 1998; Malchukov 2000).

(v) Another frequent occurrence of genitive concerns marking of the objects of adpositions and spatial adverbials:

(23)   Aghul (Merdanova 2004: 29)
       Xul-ar-i-n   üdih
       house-PL-OBL-GEN front
       'in front of the houses'

Many such heads in fact go back to nouns, which motivates possessive marking of their dependents.

At the clause level we find a number of instantiations of genitive that are *prima facie* unrelated to the 'possessive genitive'. Some of them indicate the reduced individuation of nominals, the classic example being the 'genitive of negation' found

in some Slavic and Germanic languages. Here the choice of the genitive rather than some other case can be motivated by the non-specificity of a nominal under the scope of negation (24). Parallels to this are observed, for instance, in Kuot, where the possessive marker may also accompany deindividuated core participants.

(24)   Russian
   Nikogda on   ran'še mandarin-ov   ne vid-yva-l.
   never   he.NOM earlier tangerine-GEN.PL not see-ITER-PAST[M.SG]
   'He had never seen tangerines before.'

Furthermore, genitive marking of either actor or undergoer can reflect reduced semantic transitivity (in the sense of Hopper and Thompson 1980). For example, in some Latin strata we find object genitive with low transitive verbs such as *studeō* 'to strive after', and *fastidiō* 'to dislike'. This function is possibly related to the preceding one, since deindividuation of a participant often goes together with reduction in transitivity.

Thus, clause-level genitive can code marked situations as compared to more prototypical instances of the relevant constructions licensing other cases. However, we will see in the next section that such markedness is by no means universal.

39.2.3 Polysemy patterns

It is not uncommon for a language to utilize the same case for the coding of adnominal possessors and for some basic function at the clause level, though such a case is often not labelled as 'genitive'. Two kinds of polyfunctionality can be distinguished in this respect. The first kind includes polysemy with core/syntactic cases. For example, languages often code the possessor in a similar way to the marked participant in a transitive construction. Thus, possessives reflect ergative case in such diverse languages as Eskimo, Austronesian Niue, Indo-European Ladakhi, Northeast Caucasian Lak, Northwest Caucasian Circassian languages, and an isolate, Burushaski (though in Circassian and Burushaski it may be better to speak of a general oblique case). There are also languages such as Martuthunira and Karachai-Balkar where the possessor is marked identically to the transitive object. Finally, in many Philippine languages claimed to belong to the symmetric type (Foley 1998), one case codes both the possessor and the non-subject argument in transitive clauses (i.e. undergoer in active transitives and actor in passive transitives).

The second kind of polyfunctionality concerns more semantic cases such as dative, ablative, and locative. Quite often, possessors are marked like recipient/beneficiary datives. This is observed, for instance, in Bulgarian, Colloquial French, languages of Australia, etc. That the connection between the two functions is not accidental is supported by the fact that even in languages contrasting datives and genitives, the former occasionally are found on adnominal-anchoring

dependents, while the latter sometimes mark recipients, that is, prospective possessors (see Næss, Chapter 38, Lamiroy and Delbecque 1998 and Lander 2004 for discussion).

Somewhat less widespread is the use of the same case for the possessor and the source. One example of a language where the ablative case can code the possessor is Jaru, despite the fact that this language does possess a genitive case:

(25)   Jaru (Tsunoda 1981a: 194)
   ɲunuŋiɲ-d,u   *jambi-gu guɲar-u ŋa-ji*   *bajan-i*
   you(SG).ABL-ERG big-ERG dog-ERG Decl-1SG.ACC bite-PAST
   'Your big dog bit me.'

Notably, partial genitive/ablative syncretism is also reconstructed for Proto-Indo-European (Beekes 1995).

Even less common, at least to my knowledge, is the genitive/locative pattern of polysemy. Languages exhibiting it include Budukh (Gilles Authier, pers. com.), Sinhala (see 39.1.4), Krongo, Jaqaru, and Siuslwan.

39.2.4 Diachronic issues

Heine (1997b; 2002) and Heine and Kuteva (2001) note six basic grammaticalization schemas for possessives, namely (X = possessor, Y = possessum):

 (i) 'Y at X' Location Schema
 (ii) 'Y from X' Source Schema
(iii) 'Y for/to X' Goal Schema
(iv) 'X with Y' Companion Schema
 (v) '(As for) X, X's Y' Topic Schema
(vi) 'Y, X's possession' Property Schema

As we have seen, schemas (i)–(iii) do participate in the formation of genitive-like expressions. This is not surprising because all of the corresponding cases, namely locative, ablative, and dative, can provide characterization of not only events but also individuals. Therefore the semantic bleaching of the relations designated by these cases may lead to their use as unmarked adnominal cases. The fourth and the fifth schemas are not found with genitives, while the schema (vi) could imaginably provide a source for a construction where a genitive form appears as a self-standing phrase (as in 18), although I am not aware of any apparent developments of this kind.

The origin of the syncretism of marking of core arguments and possessors is more obscure. Sometimes this may be an outcome of coincidence, as in Finnish, where accusative/genitive syncretism has its origin in a particular phonological change. In other languages such syncretism may have resulted from the development of nominal forms into verbal ones, as in Philippine languages, where

an adnominal dependent was arguably reinterpreted as a dependent of the verb (Starosta et al. 1982). All in all, the usual direction of evolution is seemingly from genitive to core cases rather than vice versa (except for languages with oblique cases functioning as genitives).

Various theories attempted to assimilate possessives to other constructions, such as locative (e.g. most papers in Baron et al. 2001) or subject–predicate (Abney 1987) ones. However, many of the synchronic facts these theories take in support are essentially diachronic (cf. Heine 2002). The possessive should therefore be regarded as a phenomenon of its own, and genitive as a phenomenon of its own inside possessives.

Acknowledgements